

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing multimedia presentations on demand in a near on demand environment, comprising:

pre-recording a beginning segment for each one of a set of multimedia presentations which are broadcast with a periodic interval, each said beginning segment having a duration at least as long as said periodic interval; and, responsive to a user request for performance of a selected one of said multimedia presentations:

a) commencing playback of a beginning segment corresponding to said selected one of said multimedia presentations;

b) commencing recording of said selected one of said multimedia presentations for which broadcast has already begun; and,

c) switching said playback of said beginning segment to playback said recording of said selected one of said multimedia presentations when program content of said beginning segment corresponds with program content of said selected one of multimedia presentations contained in said recording.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising pausing said multimedia presentation by stopping said playback of at least one of said beginning segment and said recording of said selected one of said multimedia presentations while continuing to record said selected one of said multimedia presentations.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising at least one of rewinding and fast forwarding said playback of said recording of said selected one of said multimedia presentations while continuing to record said selected one of said multimedia presentations.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said beginning segment and said selected one of said multimedia presentations are recorded on a common storage medium.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said common storage medium is selected from [the] a group consisting of a magnetic disk medium, an optical disk medium and an electronic storage medium.

1 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising alternately reading from said  
2 common storage medium for said playback of said pre-recorded beginning segment  
3 and recording of said selected one of said multimedia presentations on said common  
4 storage medium.

1 7. The method of claim 4, further comprising inhibiting playback of said recording  
2 of said selected one of said multimedia presentations after a presentation of said  
3 selected multimedia presentation is completed.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically pre-  
2 recording beginning segments upon initial activation of a multimedia system.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising, responsive to at least one of a user  
2 request and an automatic signal, periodically updating beginning segments with new  
3 beginning segments corresponding to subsequent multimedia presentations.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein said multimedia presentations are presented  
2 on one of the group consisting of a television display, a video display, a computer  
3 display, a personal digital assistant, a home theater system and an audio system.

1 11. A system for providing multimedia presentations on demand in a near on  
2 demand environment, comprising:

3 a multimedia recorder configured for pre-recording a beginning segment for  
4 each of a set of multimedia presentations which are broadcast at a periodic interval,  
5 each said beginning segment having a duration at least as long as said periodic  
6 interval; and,

7 a multimedia system controller operatively communicating with said  
8 multimedia recorder and causing said multimedia recorder to:

9 a) commence playback of a beginning segment corresponding to a  
10 selected one of said multimedia presentations;

11 b) commence recording of said selected one of said multimedia  
12 presentations for which broadcast has already begun; and,

13 c) to switch from said playback of said one of said beginning segments to  
14 playback of a recorded portion of said selected one of said multimedia presentations  
15 when said playback program content of said one of said beginning segments  
16 correlates to playback program content of said selected multimedia presentation  
17 contained in said recorded portion.

1 12. The system of claim 11, further comprising a user interface that receives user  
2 commands and communicates said user commands to said multimedia system  
3 controller.

1 13. The system of claim 12, wherein said user interface comprises a menu of said  
2 multimedia presentations available to a user from which said user can select a  
3 multimedia presentation for performance.

1 14. The system of claim 12, further comprising a control responsive to a user  
2 input that when activated pauses said multimedia presentation by stopping said  
3 playback of at least one of said beginning segment and said recorded portion while  
4 continuing to record said selected one of said multimedia presentations.

1 15. The system of claim 12, further comprising a trick mode control responsive to  
2 a user input for causing a trick mode operation of said multimedia recorder, said trick  
3 mode comprising at least one of: slow motion; fast motion; fast forward; and rewind.

1 16. The system of claim 11, wherein said multimedia recorder records said  
2 beginning segment and said selected one of said multimedia presentations on a  
3 common storage medium.

1 17. The system of claim 16, wherein said common storage medium is selected  
2 from the group consisting of a magnetic disk medium, an optical disk medium and an  
3 electronic storage medium.

1 18. The system of claim 11, wherein said multimedia system controller comprises  
2 an automatic recording function that causes said multimedia recorder to record said  
3 beginning segments upon initial activation of said system.

1 19. The system of claim 11, wherein said multimedia system controller comprises  
2 an automatic update function that periodically updates ones of said beginning  
3 segments with a plurality of new beginning segments corresponding to a subsequent  
4 set of multimedia presentations.

1 20. The system of claim 11, further comprising a receiver for receiving broadcasts  
2 of said selected one of said multimedia presentations.

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